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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the issue of whether trust among members of an educational institution is related to: (1) accurate information flow; (2) upward, downward, or lateral information flow; or (3) completeness of information. The study also considered whether a low level of trust is associated with inaccurate, incomplete information. A questionnaire was developed and administered in a midwestern, suburban, metropolitan school district with 18 elementary schools employing 379 teachers. Due to teachers' fears of being identified by principals, problems were encountered in grouping returned questionnaires by school. However, 11 schools provided enough returns to warrant analysis. Findings indicated that the greater the trust in an elementary school, the greater the reported accuracy of information flow in the school. Conversely, the lower the trust, the lower the reported accuracy of information flow. Accuracy of information flow was positively related to trust even when directionality of information flow was not specified. Upward, downward, and lateral information flow were all related to trust, with more directionality when there was more trust and more filtering of information when trust was low. Schools high in trust had more upward than downward communication and vice versa. The more trust that existed, the more complete was the information. The more accurate the information flow was, the more complete the information was. (RH)

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TRUST AS IT RELATES TO INFORMATION FLOW VARIABLES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of trust has been mentioned throughout numerous investigations of organizational behavior (e.g., Haney, 1967; Likert, 1967). Each of these authors argues that trust is a key ingredient for an effective, functioning organization. How do the members of an organization perceive trust and its effect upon the organization? Are there consequences of a lack of trust? The nature of trust and its effect on educational organizations is worthy of investigation for at least the following reasons.

First, trust is an important concept for principals and central office administrators because, "Trust facilitates interpersonal acceptance and openness of expression, whereas mistrust evokes interpersonal rejection and arouses defensive behavior...An increase in trust will increase the exchange of accurate, comprehensive, and timely information..." (Zand, 1972). Information about the influence of trust can be of assistance in developing or sustaining organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Secondly, much discussion but little research has been devoted to trust in educational settings. Educational systems tend to be bureaucratic in nature, and bureaucratic organizations promote impersonal relations; therefore, interpersonal trust is not easily cultivated (Hurst, 1988).

Thirdly, Likert argues that when mistrust exists, hostility and dissatisfaction are increased. These may exist most frequently under an authoritative system in which upward communication is characterized by distorted, falsified information. When decisions made by top management

(central office) are formulated with inaccurate information, the decision making for the organization is seriously jeopardized.

Based on the preceding discussion, the following questions will be investigated: Is trust related to accurate information flow in an educational organization? Is trust related to the direction of information flow in an educational organization and, more specifically, to information moving upward, downward or laterally? Is trust related to completeness of information flow in an educational organization? If there is a relationship between trust and the above variables, is a low level of trust associated with inaccurate, incomplete information?

Definitions

Interpersonal trust deals with the way two people interact with one another. It includes the confidence each has with the other and an interdependence that forms a mutual bond. Interpersonal trust has been defined in various studies. Cumings (1981) defined trust as the confidence a person has in a leader's character, ability, strength, or expertise. Rotter (1967) defined trust as a generalized expectancy about the trustworthiness of others, an expectancy which forms the basis of a relatively enduring personality characteristic. Hoy and his colleagues (Hoy and Feldman, 1984; Hoy and Kapersmith 1985; Tarter and Hoy, 1988) were somewhat more specific in defining trust as a "generalized expectancy held by the work group that the word, promise, and written or oral statement of another individual group, or organization can be relied upon". In the present study trust refers to the confidence a person has in a leader's character, ability, strength, or expertise (Cumings, 1981). Accuracy refers to the precision and correctness of information flow involving school matters. Directionality will refer to the direction of

information flow, upward, downward or laterally. Completeness of information flow will refer to the amount and comprehensiveness of the information flow in an organization.

Hypotheses

The purpose of this investigation will be to identify the relationship between trust and accuracy of information flow, direction of information flow, and completeness of information flow. The major questions will be explored by investigating the following specific hypotheses:

H_1 There is no relationship between trust and accuracy of information flow within a group of elementary schools.

H_2 There is no relationship between trust and the directionally of information flow within a group of elementary schools.

H_3 There is no relationship between trust and completeness of information flow within a group of elementary schools.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In the selection of the population with which to work, several factors were taken into consideration. A school district that had at least 15 elementary schools was needed to ensure there would be sufficient schools for analysis. The school district needed to be accessible to the investigator so interviews could be conducted. Subjects needed to be from one school district so there would be comparability in the environment in which the schools operate.

A midwestern school district was selected to meet these criteria. The district was a suburban district located in a metropolitan area. There were 18 elementary schools in the district, with 379 elementary teachers. These 18 schools have a student population of 5,400 . Two of the buildings are primary (grades K-3), one building is an intermediate building (grades 3-5) and 15 are K-5 buildings.

It was also important to consider a district that had elementary schools large enough to provide an adequate sample of teachers when surveyed. A district was selected that had elementary schools with staffs of 15 to 40 teachers.

Questionnaire Items

For purposes of this study, a questionnaire was developed to measure trust as it relates to accuracy, directionality, and completeness of information.

The "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" includes four subscales respectively designed to assess these constructs. There are five questions that measure trust, four questions that measure accuracy of information, four questions that measure directionality of

information, and three questions that measure completeness of information. The survey was developed specifically for an educational setting.

The trust subscale consists of the following items:

1. I trust my administrator to treat me fairly.

2. I trust my administrator's ability to solve problems.

3 If I got into difficulties at work, I know my administrator would try and help.

4. I cannot trust the administrator with whom I work to assist me when I need help.

5. I cannot trust my administrator to listen to my concerns and suggestions.

The following items are found on the accuracy subscale:

1. The administrator in my school provides accurate information to the staff.

2. The teachers at my school provide accurate information for each other.

3. The administrator at my school receives accurate information from the staff.

4. The teachers at my school receive accurate information from the administrator.

The directionality subscale consists of the following items:

1. Teachers at my school discuss information with each other before

it is given to the administrator.

2. The teachers at my school filter information before it is

shared with the administrator.

3. The teachers at my school initiate much of the information available in my school.

4. The administrator at my school does not initiate the majority of the information to the administrator.

The following items are found on the completeness subscale:

1. The administrator at my school provides complete, comprehensive information to the staff.

2. The teachers at my school do not share complete comprehensive information with the administrator.

3. The administrator at my school provides complete comprehensive information to the staff.

A Likert-type response-format was used with the "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey". Five was strongly agree, four was agree, three was undecided, two was disagree, and one was strongly disagree.

Administration of The Survey

The "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" was sent to 379 teachers in 18 elementary schools. The first mailing was sent to teachers the first of May, and the second was sent the first of July. The survey was sent to teachers' homes with a self addressed, stamped envelope for return. Two hundred three questionnaires were coded with a number that identified the school, not the individual teacher. Although there was a 54% return, only 123 teachers of the 203 questionnaires were usable. Eighty of the teachers had torn or cut the code from the questionnaires.

The investigator called several teachers in different buildings in an attempt to determine why school codes had been torn or cut from questionnaires. Teachers reported that subjects were afraid to leave the school code on the questionnaire for fear that their principal would find out how they answered the questions. It was reported that teachers knew the code was for the school and not for individuals. Teachers wanted to assist the investigator, but were afraid to jeopardize their jobs and/or relationships with their building principal.

Five schools had a 48% or more return with the first mailing. It appeared that the school codes had not been torn from most of the surveys from these schools. Questionnaires were sent out a second time to 12 schools with a statement explaining the coding system. Two hundred sixty teachers were sent the second questionnaire. A small symbol was also placed on the back of each questionnaire that coded the school. Thus, the school code would be preserved even if the school code number was torn from the questionnaires a second time.

Twelve schools had a 48% or more return from the questionnaire after the second mailing. One school had been closed during the summer, so that school was not included in the final population. The teachers from that school had been transferred to other buildings in the district. The remaining 11 schools became the final population for the study. Thirty-five percent of the questionnaires were returned to the investigator.

There were six schools that had few returns. Four of these schools had one to three returns from the staff. It was reported to the investigator that the teachers from these schools were afraid to return the questionnaire. They were afraid that their principal would learn

about the results, and that the staff would suffer consequences. The other two schools had a few more responses, but these too were not sufficient to include in this study. If the return rate from a school was less than 45%, the school was not used in the full study.

Reliability

Table 1 presents the factor loadings for the trust scale. There were 134 cases used for the factor analysis of trust. The mean for the entire population was 5.85 and the standard deviation was 3.90. The deviation from the mean thus was greater than one-half.

Table 1

Factor Loading for Trust Scale from "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey"

Item	Loading
1. Trust administrator treat fairly.	.57
2. Trust administrator solve problems.	.85
3. Difficulties at work administrator try to help.	.91
4. No trust administrator to assist.	-.91
5. No trust administrator listen concerns, suggestions.	-.91

All items on the trust scale loaded between .57 and .91. Additional reliability analysis for the trust scale also was carried out and yielded an alpha of .99. According to these data, the trust scale has high internal consistency. The trust scale was the most reliable scale on the "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey".

The spread of responses within a school was higher for the trust scale than for the other scales in the study. The means and standard deviations for each school were computed from individual subjects' scores. Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations for each of the schools in the study for the trust scale.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Schools on Trust Scale from "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey"

School	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	4.15	5.23
2	7.35	2.25
4	6.99	2.05
7	6.79	3.09
9	4.46	3.89
11	2.38	4.54
12	8.06	1.77
13	9.09	1.52
15	1.11	4.16
17	6.57	2.58
18	7.58	2.29
Average	5.83	3.89

The variance within some buildings was high on this scale. Three of the schools (1, 11, and 15) had standard deviations higher than their respective means. Because these standard deviations for the trust scale are relatively high, conclusions must be drawn with particular caution. Building 1 had a mean of 4.15 and a standard deviation of 5.23 on this scale. School 11 had a mean of 2.38 and a standard deviation

of 4.54. School 15 had a mean of 1.61 and a standard deviation of 4.18. The three schools that had the lowest trust had standard deviations greater than the mean.

Table 3 reports the factor loadings for the accuracy scale. There were 134 cases used for the factor analysis of accuracy. According to the factor analysis, the accuracy scale has adequate internal consistency with loadings between .48 and .69.

Table 3

Factor Loadings for Accuracy Scale from "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" (N=134)

Item	Loading
1. Administrator provides accurate info to staff.	.51
2. Teachers provide accurate info to each other.	.48
3. Administrator receives accurate info from staff.	.68
4. Teachers receive accurate info from administrator.	.69

These loadings on the accuracy scale are considered an adequate basis for combining items. The accuracy scale had an alpha of .40.

There was generally good agreement among subjects about the level of accuracy in their buildings. Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations for each school in the study for the accuracy scale. The mean for the entire population on the accuracy scale was 8.80 and the standard deviation was 1.59. For school 15 the standard deviation was more than one-fourth of the mean. For no other school was the standard deviation more than one-fifth of the mean. This

indicates that teachers from school 15 were less in agreement among themselves than were teachers in other schools. School 15 also was the lowest school on overall trust, and the second lowest on accuracy. According to Table 4, teachers generally were able to agree on the extent to which accuracy of information flow was present in their buildings.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Schools on Accuracy Scale from "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey"

School	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	8.42	1.72
2	8.70	1.29
4	8.39	1.14
7	8.75	1.42
9	7.38	1.21
11	8.22	1.30
12	10.04	.98
13	10.38	1.24
15	7.85	2.05
17	9.40	1.22
18	9.87	1.27
Average	8.80	1.59

Table 5 reports the factor loadings for the directionality scale. There were 134 cases used for the factor analysis of directionality. On the directionality scale two factors were identified as part of the data on rotated factors, indicating that two independent factors are present. Subscale 1 (items 3 and 4 in Table 5) of the directionality scale measured upward and downward

communication in a group of elementary schools. Subscale 2 (items 1 and 2 in Table 5) of the directionality scale measured directionality of information flow in terms of teachers filtering information before it is given to the administrator.

Table 5

Rotated Varimax Factor Loadings for Directionality Scale "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" (N=134)

	Item	Loading 1	Loading 2
1.	Teachers discuss info with others before admin.	.09	.75
2.	Teachers filter info before given admin.	.02	.78
3.	Teachers initiate info available to school.	.79	.07
4.	Admin. no initiate majority info in school.	.81	.05

For the directionality scale two separate factors thus were identified. Both subscales were internally consistent. Items on subscale 1 of the directionality scale had loadings of .79 and .81. Items on subscale 2 of the directionality scale had loadings of .75 and .78. According to the factor analysis, factor 1 had consistency and factor 2 had consistency.

There was generally agreement among subjects about the level of directionality in their buildings according to the two subscales. The means and standard deviations for each

school will be reported for the two subscales of the directionality scale. The mean for the entire population on subscale 1 was 6.56, and the standard deviation was .95. Table 6 displays the means and standard deviations for each school in the study for subscale 1 on the directionality scale.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Schools on Subscale 1 of the Directionality Scale from "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" (N=11)

School	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	6.50	.53
2	6.42	.67
4	6.70	1.10
7	6.70	.73
9	6.43	.65
11	6.65	1.41
12	7.00	1.41
13	6.64	.67
15	6.10	1.10
17	6.00	.45
18	6.92	1.00
Average	6.56	.95

Schools 12 and 11 had the highest standard deviations on this scale. However, for no school was the standard deviation more than one-fifth of the mean. This indicates that teachers from schools 12 and 11 were less able to agree among themselves than were teachers in other schools.

The mean for the entire population on subscale 2 was 6.69 and the standard deviation was 1.63. Table 7

illustrates the means and standard deviations for each school in the study for subscale 2 on the directionality scale.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations for Schools on Subscale 2 of the Directionality Scale from "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" (N=11)

School	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	6.00	2.27
2	6.25	1.30
4	6.30	1.42
7	6.20	1.82
9	7.50	.76
11	7.41	1.12
12	6.56	1.01
13	5.73	2.24
15	8.60	.84
17	5.64	.81
18	7.17	1.53
Average	6.69	1.63

For schools 1 and 13 the standard deviations were more than one-third of the mean. For school 7 the standard deviation was more than one-fourth of the mean. However, for no other school was the standard deviation more than one-fifth of the mean. This indicates that teachers from schools 1, 7, and 13 were less able to agree among themselves than

were teachers in other schools.

Table 8 presents the factor loadings for the completeness scale. There were 134 cases used for the factor analysis.

Table 8

Factor Loadings for Completeness Scale from "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey"

Item	Loading
1. Teachers provide complete info to admin.	.84
2. Teachers no share complete info with admin.	.86
3. Admin. provides complete info to staff.	.74

According to these loadings, factors on the completeness scale have good internal consistency, with loadings between .74 and .86. In addition, the completeness scale had an alpha of .75.

There was generally agreement among subjects about the level of completeness in their buildings. The spread of responses within schools was considerably less than for the trust scale. Table 9 presents the means and standard deviations for each school in the study for the completeness scale.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations for Schools on Completeness Scale from "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" (N=11)

School	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	9.60	2.25
2	9.76	1.14
4	10.25	1.88
7	10.14	1.52
9	6.94	1.51
11	8.25	2.24
12	9.65	1.18
13	10.18	1.36
15	6.66	1.42
17	9.51	1.65
18	9.25	1.60
Average	9.07	2.00

For school 11 the standard deviation was more than one-fourth of the mean. For school 1 the standard deviation was more than one-fifth of the mean. For no other school was the standard deviation more than one-fifth of the mean. This indicates that teachers from school 11 were less in agreement among themselves than were teachers in other schools. According to Table 9, teachers generally were

able to agree on the extent to which completeness was present in their buildings.

Hypotheses

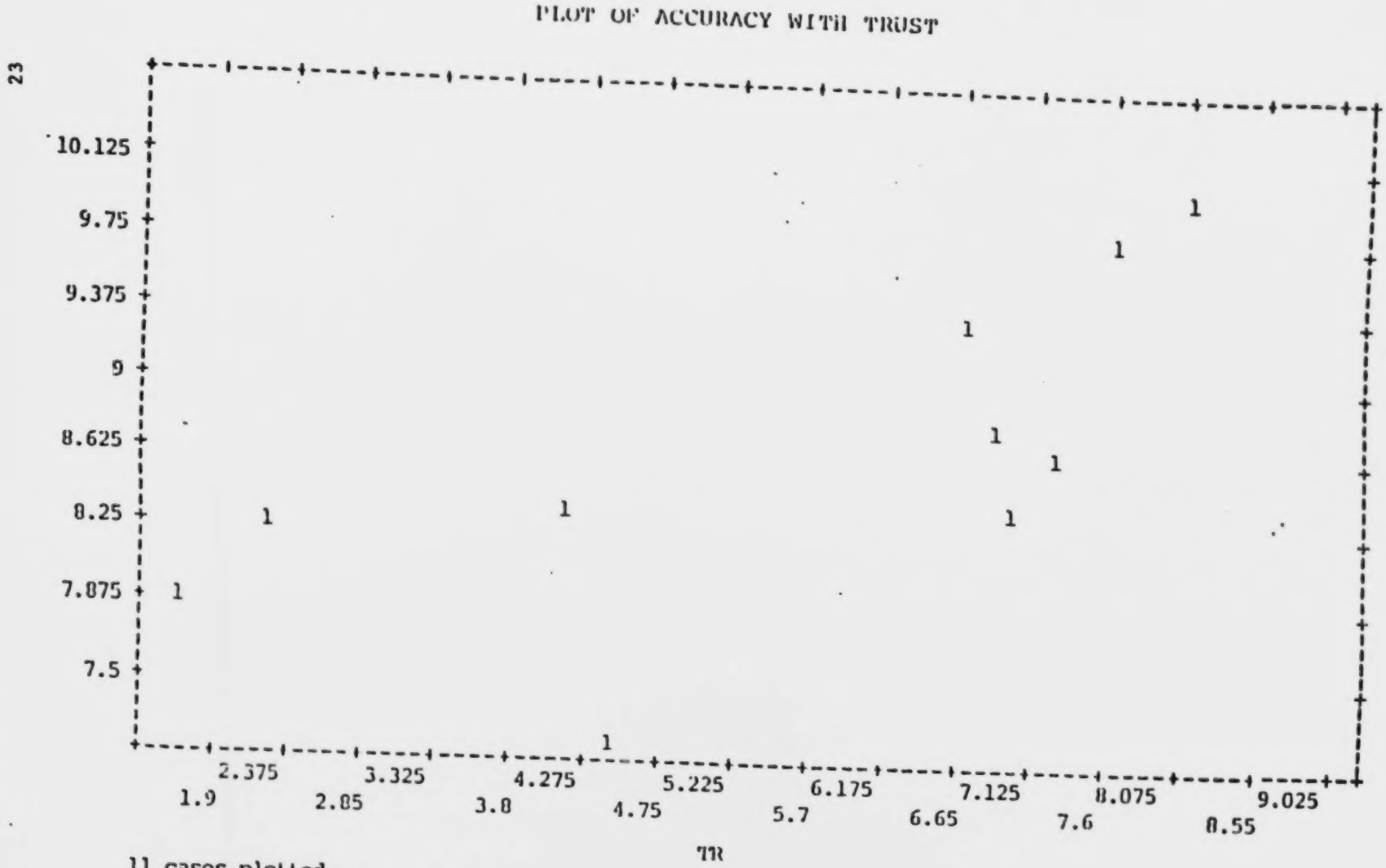
Hypothesis 1 related to the relationship between trust and accuracy of information flow within an elementary school. Hypothesis 2 dealt with the relationship between trust and directionality of information flow within a group of elementary schools. Hypothesis 3 related to the relationship between trust and completeness of information within a group of elementary schools. Hypothesis 4 pertained to the relationship between trust and performance lies. Hypothesis 5 related to the relationship between trust and performance lies; the relationship will not be significant when accuracy, directionality, and completeness are taken into account.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 related to the relationship between trust and accuracy of information flow within a group of elementary schools.

A plot of the accuracy scale with the trust scale showed a relationship between accuracy and trust. The correlation between the accuracy scale and the trust scale was .79. The two lowest schools on the trust scale were also among the four lowest on the accuracy scale. Figure 1 shows the relationship between accuracy and trust.

The correlation of .79 was significant at the .01 level.



11 cases plotted

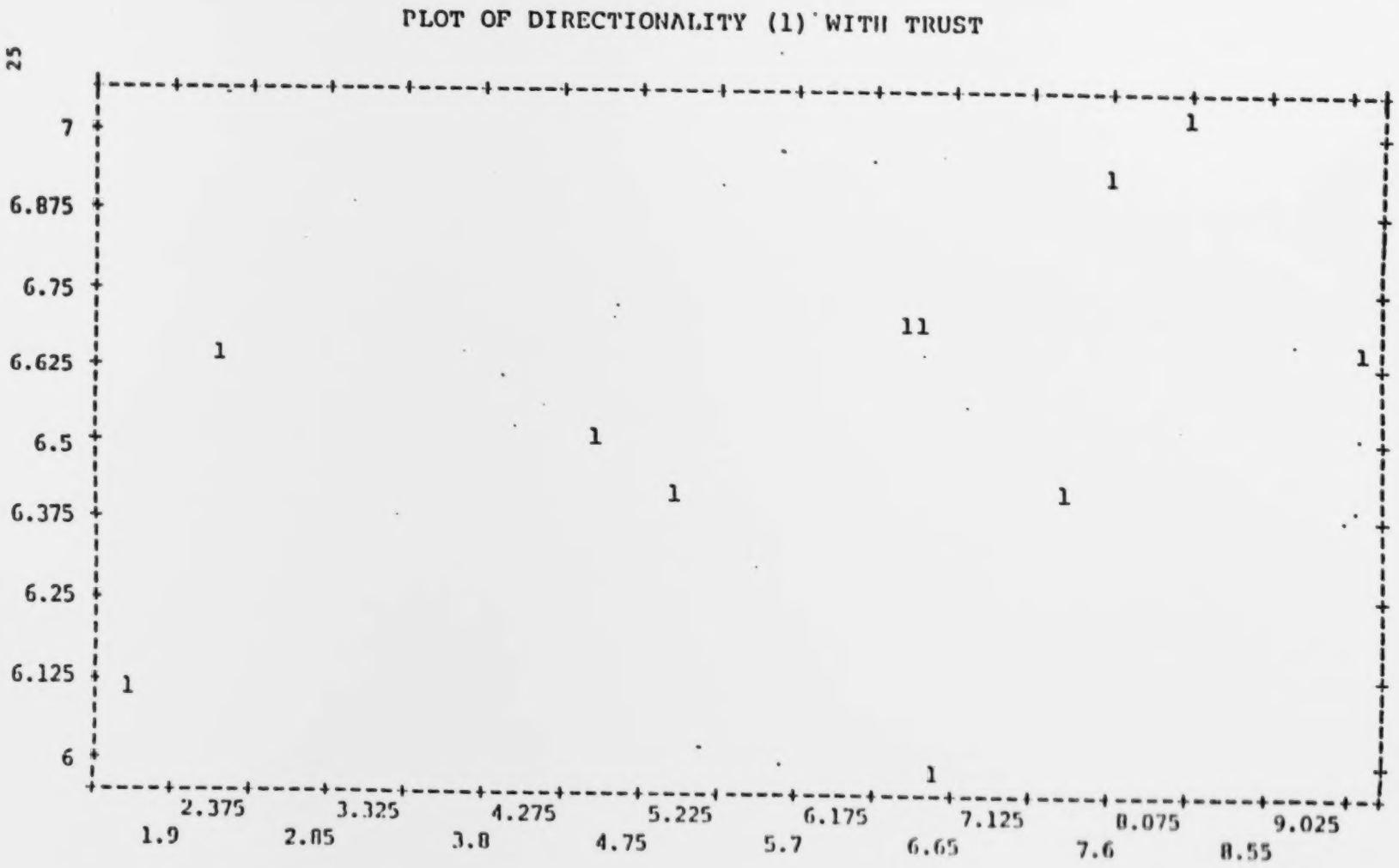
Figure 1 - PLOT OF ACCURACY WITH TRUST

Hypothesis 1 was rejected: There is a relationship between trust and accuracy of information flow within a group of elementary schools.

Hypothesis 2

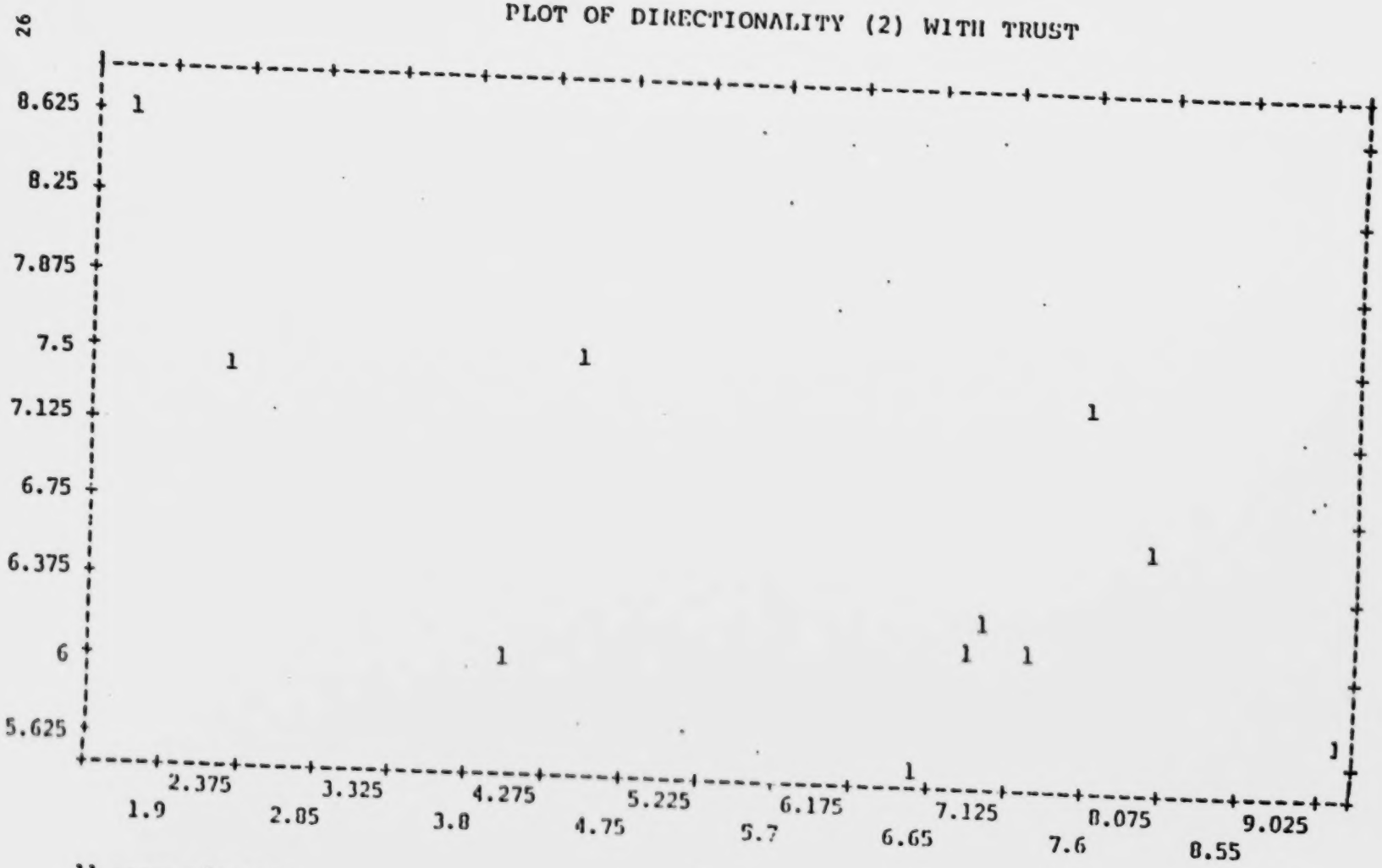
Hypothesis 2 related to the relationship between trust and directionality of information flow within a group of elementary schools. A plot of subscale 1 of the directionality scale against the trust scale showed a relationship between trust and subscale 1 of directionality of information flow (See Figure 2). The correlation was .43. One of the four schools lowest on the trust scale was also one of the lowest on subscale 1 of the directionality scale. School 17 was one of the lower schools on the trust scale and subscale 1 of the directionality scale. Schools 1 and 9 were among the four lowest schools on the trust scale and were among the five lowest schools on subscale 1 of the directionality scale.

A plot of subscale 2 of the directionality scale against the trust and directionality of information flow (See Figure 3) shows a negative relationship between trust and directionality. The correlation was -.71, significant at the .01 level. Two of the four schools at the bottom on the trust scale were also low on subscale 2 of the directionality scale. School 13 was the highest school on the trust scale and next to the lowest on subscale 2 of the directionality



11 cases plotted

Figure 2 - PLOT OF DIRECTIONALITY (1) WITH TRUST



11 cases plotted

Figure 3 - PLOT OF DIRECTIONALITY (2) WITH TRUST

scale. School 15 was the lowest school on the trust scale and the lowest on subscale 2 of the directionality scale. Hypothesis 2 was rejected: There is a relationship between trust and directionality of information flow, on both subscale and subscale 2 on the directionality scale, with a group of elementary schools.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 related to the relationship between trust and completeness of information within an elementary school

A plot (Figure 4) of the completeness scale with the trust scale showed a generally positive relationship between completeness and trust. A check was made to determine if four individuals wit greater than 13.5 on the completeness scale or less than 7.2 on the completeness scale were from the same schools. They were from four different schools, so all four were left in the data set. The correlation was .79. Three of the four schools measuring the lowest on trust were also the lowest on completeness. The absence of trust is related to low scores on completeness. Hypothesis 3 was rejected: There is a relationship between trust and completeness of information within a group of elementary schools.

Related Results

Related results were analyzed with reference to the scale intercorrelations, frequencies, and correlations between information flow and trust. The intercorrelations are shown in Table 10.

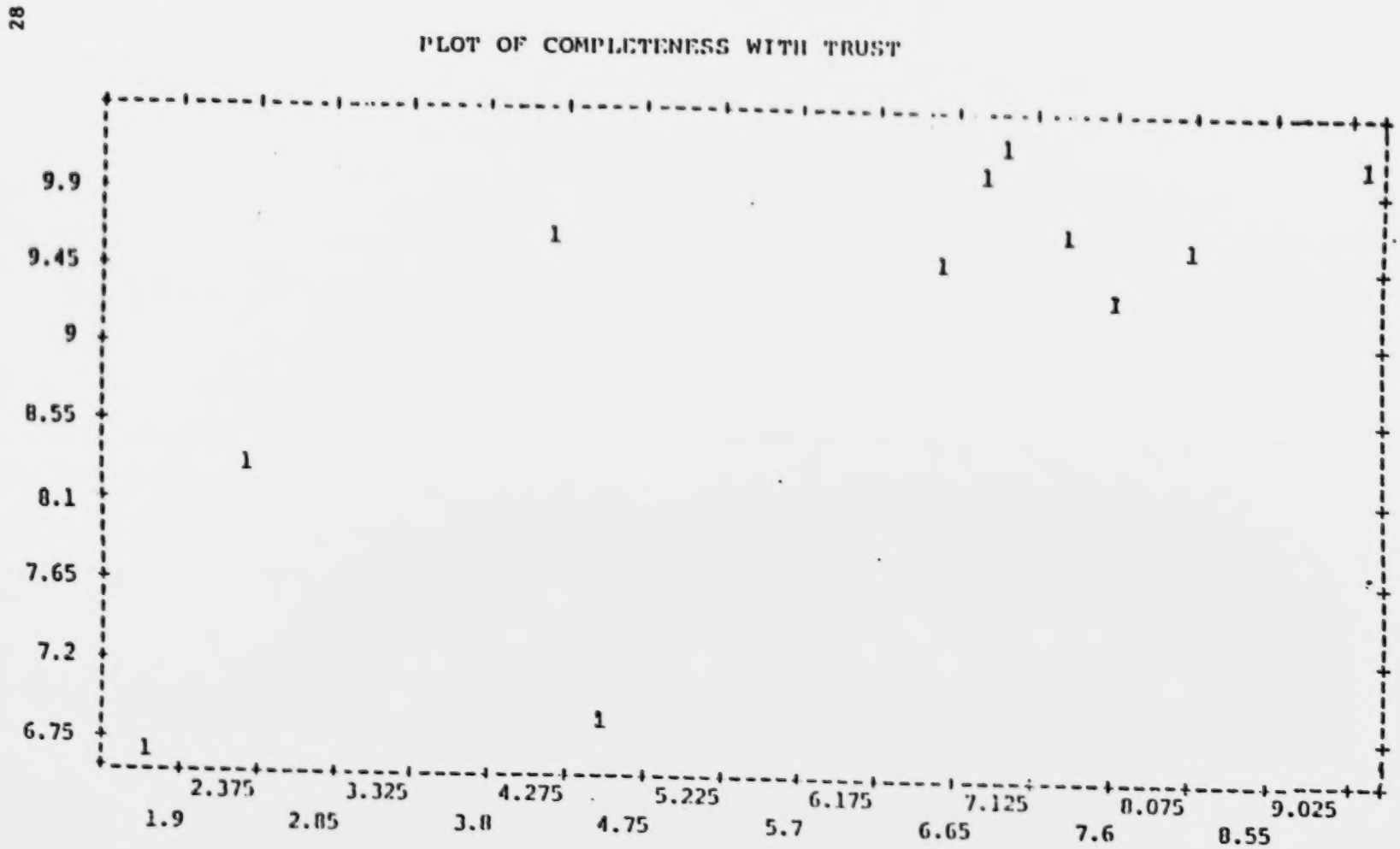


Figure 4 - PLOT OF COMPLETENESS WITH TRUST

Table 10

Intercorrelations for the Trust, Accuracy, Completeness, and Directionality Scales*

	Trust	Accuracy	Complete	Direction 1	Direction 2
Trust	1.00	.79	.79	.47	-.71
Acc	.00	1.00	.66	.43	-.54
Com	.00	.01	1.00	-.43	-.88
Dir 1	.07	.09	.10	1.00	.37
Dir 2	.01	.04	.10	.11	1.00

* Scores above the diagonal are Pearson correlations; scores below are the significance levels of these correlations.

As stated previously, the trust scale shows a positive relationship with the accuracy scale, subscale 1 of the directionality scale, and the completeness scale. Trust shows a negative relationship with subscale 2 of the directionality scale. The accuracy scale shows a negative relationship with subscale 2 of the directionality scale (-.54). Accuracy shows higher correlations with the completeness scale than with subscale 1 of the directionality scale ($r=.66$; $p=.01$ and $r=.43$; $p=.09$). The completeness scale shows a significant relationship with subscale 1 on the directionality scale (.43). Completeness shows a negative

relationship with subscale 2 of the directionality scale (-.88).

"Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" Frequencies

The frequencies for each of the 19 items on the original "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" were computed. The majority of the responses fell at or between 2 (disagree) and 4 (agree). Overall, there was relatively little spread in the responses. There were four items (three from the original full directionality scale and one from the original completeness scale) that were eliminated from the preceding statistical analysis because they did not correlate with the other items on the scale or with trust. One additional item was omitted from the completeness scale because it was negatively correlated with the other items on the completeness scale.

Correlations of Information Flow with Trust

As described above, the accuracy scale, subscales 1 and 2 of the directionality scale, and the completeness scale showed statistically significant relationships with trust. The reader should recall that accuracy and trust showed a relationship of .79. Subscale 1 of the directionality scale produced a relationship of .47 with trust. Subscale 2 of the directionality scale showed a relationship of -.71 with trust. The completeness scale had a relationship of .79 with the trust scale. These four subscales plus an item dealing

with the administrator initiating the majority of information which was not included in the preceding analysis but had a fairly high correlation with trust of .90, were factor analyzed to determine if they might be statistically considered part of a larger concept involving information flow. Results are shown in Table 11.

As shown in the table, loadings of the five variables ranged from .55 to .92. The factor loadings were used to construct a single variable. This variable titled "Information Flow", correlated at .90 with trust. This correlation provides further support for the conclusion that there is a strong relationship between trust and information flow in this study.

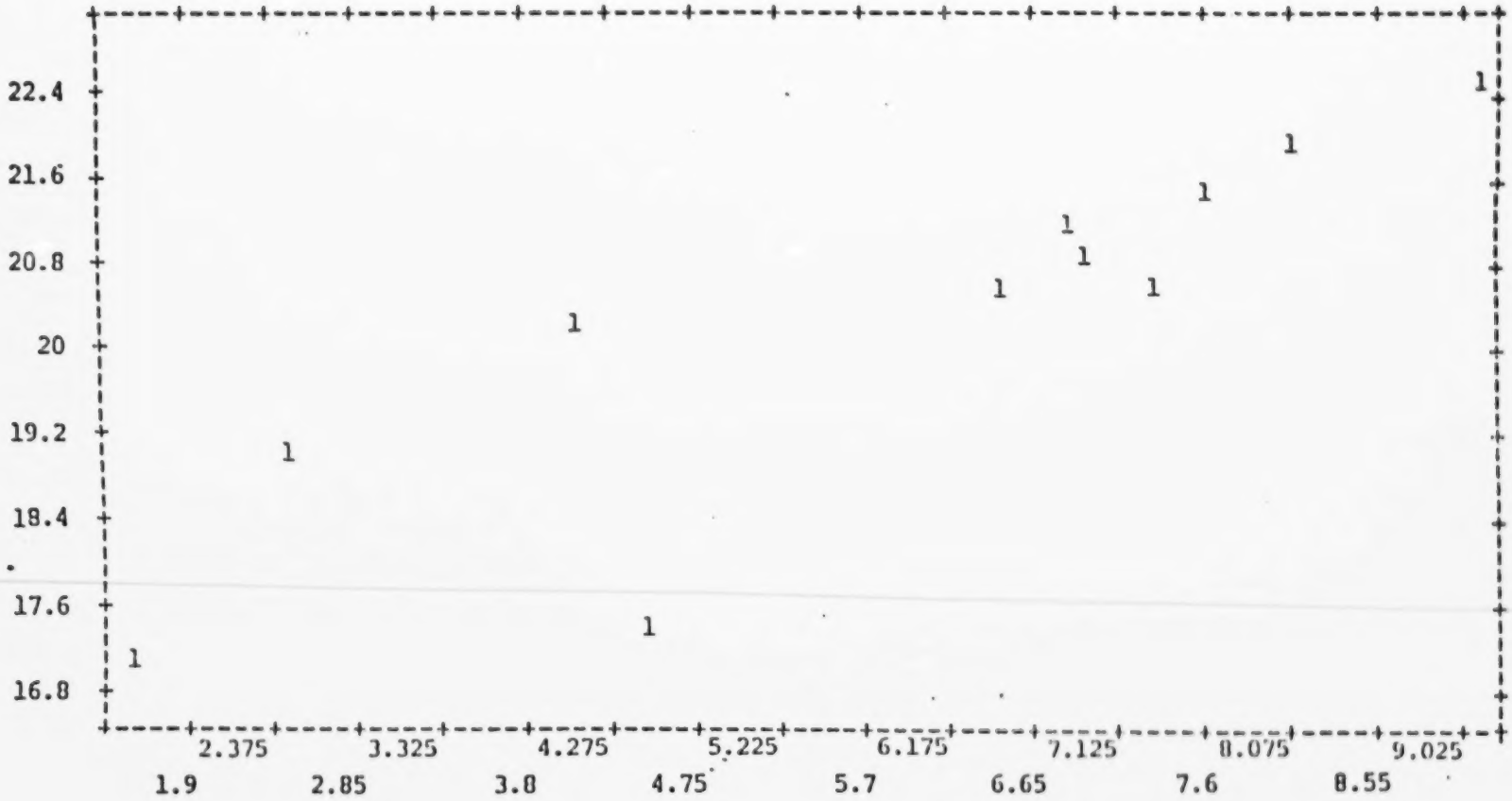
Table 11

Factor Loadings for Trust Scale from "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" and Information Flow Variables

Variable	Loading
Accuracy Scale	.80
Directionality Scale 1	.55
Directionality Scale 2	.81
Completeness Scale	.92
Administrator initiates majority information	.80

A plot (Figure 5)of the three information flow scales with the trust scale showed a positive relationship between information flow and trust. This strong relationship is portrayed in the plot in Figure 5.

PLOT OF INFORMATION FLOW WITH TRUST



11 cases plotted.

Figure 5 - PLOT OF INFORMATION FLOW WITH TRUST

Discussion

Trust and its Relationship to Accuracy of Information Flow

Accuracy of information flow and its relationship to trust have been studied the most in the research on trust and information flow. In previous research, a relationship has been shown to exist between trust and accuracy of information flow. Zand (1981) found a relationship between trust and accuracy of information flow. Zand asserted that an increase in trust would increase the exchange of accurate, comprehensive and timely information. The present study also found that the higher the trust in an elementary school, the higher the reported accuracy of information flow within an elementary school;. Conversely, the lower the trust, the lower the reported accuracy of information flow.

Huseman, Lahiff, and Wells (1974) studied trust and its relationship to upward communication. He identified a relationship between trust and accuracy of upward communication flow. However, it is possible that the relationship Huseman found between trust and accuracy of upward communication was due to his measurement of the directionality (i.e. upwardness) of information flow. According to the present study, there is a relationship between trust and accuracy of information flow when directionality of the information flow is not specified. The correlation between the accuracy scale and the trust

scale was .79. The results of this study thus indicate that accuracy of information flow is positively related to trust even when directionality of information flow is not specified at the same time.

Trust and its Relationship to Directionality of Information Flow

Other researchers have also found that a relationship exists between trust and directionality of information flow. However, most previous studies that have examined trust and its relationship to directionality of information flow have explored upward communication only. The results of the present study, indicate that upward, downward, and lateral information flow are all related to trust. However, the possibility exists that the previous studies measured accuracy of information flow rather than directionality of information flow.

Subscale 1 of the directionality scale measured upward and downward communication in a group of elementary schools. Subscale 2 of the directionality scale measured directionality of information flow in terms of teachers filtering information before it is given to the administrator, thus assessing lateral to upward information flow in an elementary building. Subscale 1 correlated positively with trust ($r=.47$) and subscale 2 correlated negatively with trust ($r= -.71$). These correlations mean

that there is more directionality when there is more trust and that there is more filtering of information when trust is low. The possibility exists that when there is low trust in a school, the directionality of information flow is primarily downward. Schools high in trust have more upward than downward communication and vice versa. According to data in this study, teachers filtering information may indicate a situation that is lacking in trust. Thus the negative correlation. Upward, downward and lateral communication were explored in this study.

Trust and its Relationship to
Completeness of Information Flow

Completeness of information flow and its relationship to trust have been studied primarily as they relate to accuracy and directionality of information flow. Completeness of information flow has not been studied extensively as a separate construct.

O'Reilly (1978) studied completeness of information flow and found that incomplete information flow is a common problem in organizations. Zand also found that

incomplete information will be communicated in an organization if there is a lack of trust. According to this study, the more trust in an elementary school, the higher the completeness of information (r=.79).

On the "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey", completeness of information flow has a high correlation with accuracy of information flow (r=.66). According to the present study, the higher the accuracy of information flow, the higher the completeness of information flow.

Trust Scale on "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey"

On the trust scale of the "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey", two of the schools lowest on the trust scale have high standard deviations on at least two other scales. At least three questions are raised by these data. Does trust lend cohesiveness to a staff? Does trust reflect cohesiveness? Does trust contribute to consistency within a staff? Only one of the schools lowest in trust did not have a standard deviation higher than its trust score. Teachers in this school were more able to agree on the lack of trust in their building than teachers in the other schools lowest in trust. Are teachers less able to identify trust than they are to identify the other variables? The possibility exists that accuracy, directionality, and completeness of information flow

largely reflect objective actions, whereas trust may primarily reflect more subjective perceptions.

In the present study, the schools lowest in trust were also the schools lowest on the accuracy scale and the completeness scale. Two of the school lowest on trust were rated low by both subjects interviewed for the "Performance Lies Survey".

Some of the data collected for this study could not be used in the quantitative analysis. Six schools were not used in the study because there were not enough subjects responding to warrant analysis. From one school there was only one response received. According to information reported to the investigator, teachers in these schools were afraid to return the "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" because they were afraid their principals would learn the results. Did the subjects distrust the investigator and/or the building principal? The "Hurst Trust and Information Flow Survey" was an anonymous survey, so there was no way to identify individual subjects. Another question that cannot be answered, but is worthy of consideration, is did these six building principals discourage teachers from their buildings from participating in the study?

Would the subjects from these six schools have rated their schools lower in trust than the four lowest schools

examined in this study? Is there more trust in the schools rated low in this study than in the six schools that were not used? Teachers in the four schools rated the lowest in this study were willing to participate. It is possible that quantifiable data about trust in this six schools would have provided even stronger support for the conclusions reported above.

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